KUALA Lumpur Hockey Club (KLHC) tightened their grip on the Malaysian Hockey League Premier Division title with a 7-1 drubbing of Nur Insafi while their rivals, Maybank and Tenaga Nasional, both dropped points at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang yesterday. KLHC took only two minutes to get on the scoresheet through a Mohd Razie Rahim penalty corner and added to their tally through a Muhd Azwar Abdul Rahman field goal in the 17th minute. Nur Insafi pulled one back when they forced a KLHC own goal just a minute later but were to enter the break, trailing 1-3 after Akhtar Ali found the back of the net for KLHC in the 24th minute. The second-half saw KLHC pushing forward with goals from Chua Boon Huat (55th minute), Muhammad Imran (62nd minute), Muhammad Umar Bhutta (63rd minute) and Waseem Ahmad (66th minute) to seal the match.

Australian international Timothy Deavin will, however, be suspended for KLHC's crucial clash against Maybank tomorrow after picking up a green and yellow card during the game. KLHC coach K. Dharmaraj said he was happy with the performance of his charges yesterday. "It was quite an open game and I am very happy that our boys took their chances well today (yesterday)," said Dharmaraj. Meanwhile, Maybank's title hopes took a big dent when they could only draw 2-2 with UniKL at USM, Penang yesterday. Maybank, who edged Nur Insafi 4-3 at the National Stadium last week, started well when Pakistani Mohd Waqas Sharif put them ahead in the 31st minute. Mohd Noor Faeez Ibrahim put UniKL level in the 49th minute. Maybank were denied a penalty stroke shortly after and UniKL came back strongly after the incident with Mohd Noor Faeez scoring his second goal of the match in the 66th minute. Maybank were, however, spared defeat when Muhammad Waqas also notched his second of the match a minute later to force a 2-2 draw. Tenaga Nasional's distant hopes of catching league leaders KLHC ended when they lost 3-2 to Sapura, also at USM Penang. TODAY -- Premier Division: Sapura v Terengganu. Division One: Sunday 2030 v UiTM (National Stadium II, 6pm). (All matches at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang unless otherwise stated). By Fadhli Ishak